

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT KEY PROCESSES

Authorization

The federal CSBG Act was up for reauthorization in 2007. A year-long Continuing Resolution was passed to keep status quo funding levels for 2008 and 2009. There has been much debate and the rules are certain to change. The President's Budget has zeroed CSBG funding out for several years in a row. Reauthorization is fairly certain, however funding reduction is possible.

Funding

Federal Appropriation: CSBG funds are appropriated annually. Each appropriation covers a two-year period. The annual federal budget is often not passed in time for the State to allocate funds based on an actual appropriation. In practice, Department Commerce operates through a series of overlapping grants that are awarded via a formula based on need and federal poverty level; and one federally funded grant is expended before the next grant is utilized.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were appropriated for CSBG and awarded in late spring 2009.

Notifications of appropriation level or continuing resolution are mailed to the Commerce Director.

State Allocation: The State allocates funds to grantees according to the same formula used with federal funds, as state funds allow.

Community Development Block Grant Funding for Public Services: CDBG Public Services funds are contracted to CSBG eligible entities in non-entitlement areas of the State through County Governments. As a result, the processes for CSBG and CDBG Public Services intersect.

Eligible Entities

There are 31 eligible entities that must receive at least 90 percent of the federal appropriation for Washington State. Thirty are multi-service community action agencies and one is a Limited Purpose Agency. Twenty-seven are non-for-profit, three operate within county government, and one operates within city government.

The State may use up to five percent of the block grant for administration and the remaining 5% is discretionary funds. Often the Washington State Community Action Partnership receives some of the discretionary funding to assist the state with training and technical assistance.

The process for terminating eligibility for a CSBG eligible entity is prescriptive and lengthy, and requires a public hearing process. The State must provide technical assistance before a termination process can begin.

Twelve of the eligible entities receive CDBG Public Service funds.

Planning (application)

State Plan: The State must submit a plan every two years. The plan is Commerce's application for federal funding. A public hearing is held, public comments are accepted, and a legislative hearing is held. The plan makes administrative and programmatic assurances to the federal government; lists

eligible entities—their service areas and planned funding levels; describes the allocation formula and planned uses of block grant funds; provides an overview of CSBG community assessments and Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) implementation; and details state monitoring practices.

Local Plans and Community Assessments: Annual local plans with community assessments serve as annual applications for funding from eligible entities to the State. Plans must include the eligible entity's mission, community assessment methodology, priority needs and plan for addressing priority needs; service locations; service linkages; narrative examples of program impacts; innovations and local collaborations; descriptions of programs for youth and seniors; budget details; projected outcome targets for families, agencies and communities; board composition; and mandatory federal assurances.

CDBG Public Services Applications: CDBG applications for non-entitlement areas are reviewed in conjunction with the CSBG applications.

Applications are due in late October.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is conducted as part of the process of reviewing the plan for each eligible entity.

Contracting

Commerce contracts with federal funds run from January to September of the next year. The two federal grants overlap for nine months of the year. Commerce contracts separately with State General Funds. These grants run for two years, and coincide with the biennial calendar, which runs July 1 to June 30 each year.

Grants are amended as needed if federal and/or state funds are adjusted.

Performance Measurement and reporting

Eligible entities report outcomes to Commerce twice a year, in August and February, and compare actual results to the targets set in their annual plans. The state and eligible entities are required to use ROMA principles and tools to report under the six national goals (2 family goals, 2 agency goals and 2 community goals) and 12 national indicators for CSBG.

The State uses a database supplied by the National Association of State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) to report financial data, local service outcomes for families, agencies and communities; client demographics, best practices and innovations, and State achievements.

CSBG outcomes include outcomes for all of the funding that an eligible entity receives regardless of fund source. CDBG Public Service outcomes are reported through CSBG.

Fiscal reporting. Eligible entities report monthly. Commerce advances federal funds to grantees in good standing.

A detailed report is required when funds in a grant have been totally expended. Commerce must provide a detailed closeout report to DHHS.

Monitoring

By law, the state must monitor each of the 31 eligible entities once every three years. Commerce monitors according to a plan based on risk assessment and last monitoring date. The state monitors for compliance with the CSBG Act, as well as for continuous improvement and best practice. The following organizational systems are reviewed: leadership and governance, strategic planning, partnerships/linkages/community relations, programs and services, results, fiscal and administrative, and best practice/quality improvement.

Training and Technical Assistance

The State is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to eligible entities who are out of compliance and to implement ROMA and other federal initiatives. Commerce contracts with the Washington State Community Action Partnership to provide training and technical assistance for eligible entities.

Contact Person

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